magical in such gifts. The silver dances being made of distorted numbers, are unintelligible to nature, have all the qualities of an ordinary human being. The worshippers believe that the deities may also have their strength in course of time which can be augmented only by offering suitable sacrifices. They presented pieces of metal to consider as them the supernatural 'power' which are concentrated or lodged in those regions of the sacrificial animal, from where they were taken out. It is a case of reciprocal help between the deity and the devotee so that on attaining their normal strength, they would fulfil their request.

The Khasi people while participating in the celebration gave vent to their emotion through their traditional cries. It could not be definitely established whether these were any indications of frightening the evil spirits but on the other hand, these were intended to cheer the boys, musicians, and the respective units taking parts in the celebration. The musicians on another occasion, went round the altar three times in reaching the top of the hill. The members of the Syiem's house similarly performed a sacred dance round the five pipes of central hall (Shlur) to the same number of times. This odd number of time seemed to be an auspicious one. The exact cause for such a ceremonial attitude to the figure may be to pay respect to their primal ancestors (Ka Iawbei), her husband (U Thawlang) and her brother, i.e., first married couple (U Suidnai) who are considered highest amongst all the Khasi deities.

The dancing is generally taken as secular part of religious function, but the Khasi people considered them (except the last one) as sacred for the reason that it is one of their methods of propitiating their deity. The people at times, ascribe certain meanings to them to rationalise their dancing. The dancing invariably put the participants into ecstasy to enable them to be in communion with their supernatural beings, so these are interpreted as a device to control the sports inspite of its calm and quiet nature. The people even then enjoyed them with the hope that these would prevent the intruding spirits from spreading diseases. Owing to the fixation of the dates of the function at the time of sowing period, the dance of the unmarried girls may have some bearing on the promotion of fertility of the soil. The custom of allowing Khasi boys to dance round the spinsters with fly-flap in one of their hands may be to protect them from the influence of the evil spirits.

The heads of the various units adhered to the official precedence strictly before they allowed a common man to take part in the dancing. The custom of allowing two officials to dance, at a time, was in recognition to their equal status. It had become a practice to follow at every stage of their function. The presence of all the in-charge of this kinship were essential to secure the blessings of their deity on behalf of his subjects whom they represent in official capacity in the festival. This is a suitable mechanism to foster unity and solidarity among the people of the different units, which is the main aim of this celebration. This was found to be so when Khasi people from all parts of State were seen witnessing the dancing of the unmarried girls. The informant on being asked to state the reason of permitting the spinsters only in this dance, came out with an interesting fact about the ancient Khasi tradition. The dance used to offer at one time, an opportunity to the youngmen of the Royal families in selecting their brides. A betel leaf with a nut were usually thrown at a girl and the men going round them, remained as witness of this incident. This explanation received some support from the frequent utterances (*ring-eong*) by the public, expressing a desire to run away with a girl dancing with graceful style.

The celebration can be taken up as a solidarity rite. The performance is all the more essential for the purpose of security without which the people